IN THE CLAIMS:

1. A computer implemented method for predicting travel resource availability comprising the steps:

receiving a candidate itinerary;

determining a probability that the candidate itinerary will remain available for booking for a period of time; and

outputting the probability.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of receiving a candidate itinerary further comprises:

receiving a customer request for travel; and

selecting a candidate itinerary that satisfies the customer request.

3. The method of claim 2, wherein the step of determining a probability comprises the step of:

calculating a probability that the client itinerary will be available for booking based upon historical availability information.

4. The method of claim 3, further comprising the step of:

determining when the candidate itinerary will become unavailable for booking based on fare rules.

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5. The method of claim 3 wherein the step of determining a probability further comprises:

determining when the candidate itinerary will become unavailable given that a lower-priced itinerary has become unavailable.

6. The method of claim 3 wherein calculating a probability further comprises:

determining when the candidate itinerary will become unavailable based upon a flight departure date.

7. The method of claim 3 wherein calculating a probability further comprises:

determining a probability that an unavailable itinerary will become available.

8. A method for increasing reliability of booking airline travel itineraries comprising the steps of:

obtaining a candidate itinerary including availability information; and

determining whether the availability information should be updated based on the candidate itinerary and a situation table.

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9. The method of claim 8 further comprising:

creating the situation table comprising sample itineraries and historical availability information.

10. The method of claim 8 further comprising:

dynamically updating the situation table based on the availability information.

11. The method of claim 9, wherein creating a situation table comprises:

obtaining availability information from at least two data sources based on the candidate itinerary;

determining a difference between the availability information from the at least two sources; and

storing in the situation table an indication that the availability information should be updated prior to booking, wherein the indication is based on the difference.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein the storing step further comprises:

storing in the situation table an indication that the availability information should be updated prior to booking but only when the candidate itinerary is not rendered irrelevant by fare rules.

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13. The method of claim 11 wherein the storing step further comprises:

storing in the situation table an indication that the availability information should be updated prior to booking but only when a difference between the availability information from the at least two sources exceeds an error threshold.

14. A system for predicting travel resource availability implemented on a computer, the system comprising:

means for receiving a candidate itinerary;

means for determining a probability that the candidate itinerary will remain available for booking for a period of time; and

means for outputting the probability.

15. The system of claim 14 further comprising:

means for receiving a customer request for travel; and

means for selecting a candidate itinerary that satisfies the customer request.

16. The system of claim 15, further comprising:

means for calculating a probability that the client itinerary will be available for booking based upon historical availability information.

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17. The system of claim 16, further comprising:

means for determining when the candidate itinerary will become unavailable for booking based on fare rules.

18. The system of claim 16 wherein the means for determining a probability further comprises:

means for determining when the candidate itinerary will become unavailable given that a lower-priced itinerary has become unavailable.

19. The system of claim 16 wherein calculating a probability further comprises:

means for determining when the candidate itinerary will become unavailable based upon a flight departure date.

20. The system of claim 16 wherein calculating a probability further comprises:

means for determining a probability that an unavailable itinerary will become available.

21. A system for increasing reliability of booking airline travel itineraries implemented on a computer, the system comprising:

means for obtaining a candidate itinerary including availability information; and

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means for determining whether the availability information should be updated based on the candidate itinerary and a situation table.

22. The system of claim 21 further comprising:

means for creating the situation table comprising sample itineraries and historical availability information.

23. The system of claim 21 further comprising:

means for dynamically updating the situation table based on the availability information.

24. The system of claim 22, wherein the means for creating a situation table comprises:

means for obtaining availability information from at least two data sources based on the candidate itinerary;

means for determining a difference between the availability information from the at least two sources; and

means for storing in the situation table an indication that the availability information should be updated prior to booking, wherein the indication is based on the difference.

25. The system of claim 24, wherein the means for storing further comprises:

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means for storing in the situation table an indication that the availability information should be updated prior to booking but only when the candidate itinerary is not rendered irrelevant by fare rules.

26. The system of claim 24 wherein the means for storing further comprises:

means for storing in the situation table an indication that the availability information should be updated prior to booking but only when a difference between the availability information from the at least two sources exceeds an error threshold.

27. A computer-readable medium containing instructions for causing a computer to perform a method comprising the steps:

receiving a candidate itinerary;

determining a probability that the candidate itinerary will remain available for booking for a period of time; and

outputting the probability.

28. The computer-readable medium of claim 27 wherein the step of receiving a candidate itinerary further comprises:

receiving a customer request for travel; and

selecting a candidate itinerary that satisfies the customer request.

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29. The computer-readable medium of claim 27, wherein the step of determining a probability comprises the step of:

calculating a probability that the client itinerary will be available for booking based upon historical availability information.

30. The computer-readable medium of claim 29, wherein the method further comprises the step of:

determining when the candidate itinerary will become unavailable for booking based on fare rules.

31. The computer-readable medium of claim 30 wherein the step of determining a probability further comprises:

determining when the candidate itinerary will become unavailable given that a lower-priced itinerary has become unavailable.

32. The computer-readable medium of claim 30 wherein calculating a probability further comprises:

determining when the candidate itinerary will become unavailable based upon a flight departure date.

33. The computer-readable medium of claim 30 wherein calculating a probability further comprises:

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determining a probability that an unavailable itinerary will become available.

34. A computer-readable medium containing instructions for causing a computer to perform a method of increasing reliability of booking airline travel itineraries comprising the steps of:

obtaining a candidate itinerary including availability information; and

determining whether the availability information should be updated based on the candidate itinerary and a situation table.

35. The computer-readable medium of claim 34 wherein the method further comprises the step of:

creating the situation table comprising sample itineraries and historical availability information.

36. The computer-readable medium of claim 34 wherein the method further comprises the step of:

dynamically updating the situation table based on the availability information.

37. The computer-readable medium of claim 35, wherein the step of creating a situation table comprises the steps of:

obtaining availability information from at least two data sources based on

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the candidate itinerary;

determining a difference between the availability information from the at least two sources; and

storing in the situation table an indication that the availability information should be updated prior to booking, wherein the indication is based on the difference.

38. The computer-readable medium of claim 37, wherein the storing step further comprises:

storing in the situation table an indication that the availability information should be updated prior to booking but only when the candidate itinerary is not rendered irrelevant by fare rules.

39. The computer-readable medium of claim 37 wherein the storing step further comprises:

storing in the situation table an indication that the availability information should be updated prior to booking but only when a difference between the availability information from the at least two sources exceeds an error threshold.

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